The Purloined Letter__Edgar Allan Poe

- "The Purloined Letter" is a short story by American author Edgar Allan Poe.
- It is the third of his three detective stories featuring the fictional C. Auguste Dupin, the other two being "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt".
- These stories are considered to be important early forerunners of the modern detective story.
- It first appeared in the literary annual The Gift for 1845 (1844) and soon was reprinted in numerous journals and newspapers. It later was included in the 1845 collection Tales by Edgar A. Poe.

- **Plot summary:**

The unnamed narrator is with the famous Parisian amateur detective C. Auguste Dupin when they are joined by G-, prefect of the Paris police. The prefect has a case he would like to discuss with Dupin.
A letter from the queen's lover has been stolen from her boudoir by the unscrupulous Minister D—. D— was in the room, saw the letter, and switched it for a letter of no importance. He has been blackmailing the queen.
The prefect makes two deductions with which Dupin does not disagree:

1. The contents of the letter have not been revealed, as this would have led to certain circumstances that have not arisen. Therefore, Minister D— still has the letter in his possession.
2. The ability to produce the letter at a moment's notice is almost as important as actual possession of the letter. Therefore, he must have the letter close at hand.

The prefect says that he and his police detectives have searched D—'s town house and have found nothing. They checked behind the wallpaper and under the carpets. His men have examined the tables and chairs with magnifying glasses and then probed the cushions with needles but have found no sign of interference; the letter is not hidden in these places. Dupin asks the prefect if he knows what he is seeking, and the prefect reads a minute description of the letter, which Dupin memorizes. The prefect then bids them good day.
A month later, the prefect returns, still unsuccessful in his search. He is motivated to continue his fruitless search by the promise of a large reward, recently doubled, upon the letter's safe return, and he will pay 50,000 francs to anyone who can help him. Dupin asks him to write that check now and he will give him the letter. The prefect is astonished, but knows that Dupin is not joking. He writes the check, and Dupin produces the letter. The prefect determines that it is genuine and races to deliver it to the queen.
Alone together, the narrator asks Dupin how he found the letter. Dupin explains the Paris police are competent within their limitations, but have underestimated with whom they are dealing. The prefect mistakes the Minister D— for a fool because he is a poet. For example, Dupin explains how an eight-year-old boy made a small fortune from his friends at a game called Odds and Evens*. The boy had determined the intelligence of his opponents and played upon that to interpret their next move. He explains that D— knew the police detectives would have assumed that the blackmailer would have concealed the letter in an elaborate hiding place, and thus hid it in plain sight.
Dupin says he had visited the minister at his hotel. Complaining of weak eyes he wore a pair of green spectacles, the true purpose of which was to disguise his eyes as he searched for the letter. In a cheap card rack hanging from a dirty ribbon, he saw a half-torn letter and recognized it as the letter of the story's title. Striking up a conversation with D— about a subject in which the minister is interested, Dupin examined the letter more closely. It did not resemble the letter the prefect described so minutely; the writing was different, and it was sealed not with the "ducal arms" of the S— family, but with D—'s monogram**. Dupin noticed that the paper was chafed as if the stiff paper was first rolled one way and then another. Dupin concluded that D— wrote a new address on the reverse of the stolen one, re-folded it the opposite way and sealed it with his own seal.
Dupin left a snuff box behind as an excuse to return the next day. Resuming the same conversation they had begun the previous day, D— was startled by a gunshot in the street. While he went to investigate, Dupin switched D—'s letter for a duplicate.
Dupin explains that the gunshot distraction was arranged by him and that he left a duplicate letter to ensure his ability to leave the hotel without D— suspecting his actions. If he had tried to seize it openly, Dupin surmises D— might have had him killed. As both a political supporter of the queen and old enemy of the minister [who had done an evil deed to Dupin in Vienna in the past], Dupin also hopes that D— will try to use the power he no longer has, to his political downfall, and at the end be presented with a quotation from Prosper Jolyot de Crébillon's play Atrée et Thyeste that implies Dupin was the thief: Un dessein si funeste, S'il n'est digne d'Atrée, est digne de Thyeste (If such a sinister design isn't worthy of Atreus, it is worthy of Thyestes).

*Morra is a hand game that dates back thousands of years to ancient Roman and Greek times. Each player simultaneously reveals their hand, extending any number of fingers, and calls out a number. Any player who successfully guesses the total number of fingers revealed by all players combined scores a point.
While there are many variations of morra, most forms can be played with a minimum of two players. In the most popular version, all players throw out a single hand, each showing zero to five fingers, and call out their guess at what the sum of all fingers shown will be. If one player guesses the sum, that player earns one point. The first player to reach three points wins the game.
The rules for morra can be altered in several ways.

Odds and evens:

In this two-player version one person is designated the "odds" player while the other is labeled "evens". Players hold one hand out in front of them and count together to three (sometimes chanting "Once, twice, thrice, shoot!" or "One, two, three, shoot!"). On "shoot", both players hold out either one or two fingers. If the sum of fingers shown by both players is an even number (i.e. two or four) then the "evens" player wins; otherwise the "odds" player is the winner. Since there are two possible ways to add up to three, both players have an equal chance of winning.
Odds and evens is a simple game of chance and hand game, involving two people simultaneously revealing a number of fingers and winning or losing depending on whether they are odd or even, or alternatively involving one person picking up coins or other small objects and hiding them in their closed hand, while another player guesses whether they have an odd or even number. The game may be used to make a decision or played for fun.
The finger game is also known as swords, choosies, pick, odds-on poke, or bucking up. This zero-sum game, a variation of the ancient morra and par-impar, is played in Europe, the US, and in Brazil, especially among children.

**A monogram or wenzel (Polish: Węzeł, "knot") is a motif made by overlapping or combining two or more letters or other graphemes to form one symbol. Monograms are often made by combining the initials of an individual or a company, used as recognizable symbols or logos. A series of uncombined initials is properly referred to as a cypher (e.g. a royal cypher) and is not a monogram.

- **Analysis:**

The epigraph[1] "Nihil sapientiae odiosius acumine nimio" (Nothing is more hateful to wisdom than excessive cleverness) attributed by Poe to Seneca was not found in Seneca's known work. It is from Petrarch's treatise "De Remediis utriusque Fortunae". Poe probably took the reference from Samuel Warren's novel Ten Thousand a-Year.
Dupin is not a professional detective. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue", Dupin takes the case for amusement and refuses a financial reward. In "The Purloined Letter", however, Dupin undertakes the case for financial gain and personal revenge. He is not motivated by pursuing truth, emphasized by the lack of information about the contents of the purloined letter. Dupin's innovative method to solve the mystery is by trying to identify with the criminal. The minister and Dupin have equally matched minds, combining skills of mathematician and poet, and their battle of wits is threatened to end in stalemate. Dupin wins because of his moral strength: the minister is "unprincipled," a blackmailer who obtains power by exploiting the weakness of others.
"The Purloined Letter" completes Dupin's tour of different settings. In "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," he travels through city streets; in "The Mystery of Marie Rogêt," he is in the wide outdoors; in "The Purloined Letter," he is in an enclosed private space. French linguist Jean-Claude Milner suggests Dupin and D— are brothers, based on the final reference to Atreus[2] and his twin brother Thyestes[3].

[1] In literature, an epigraph is a phrase, quotation, or poem that is set at the beginning of a document, monograph or section thereof. The epigraph may serve as a preface to the work; as a summary; as a counter-example; or as a link from the work to a wider literary canon, with the purpose of either inviting comparison or enlisting a conventional context.
[2] In Greek mythology, Atreus (/ˈeɪtriəs/ AY-tri-əs, /ˈeɪtruːs/ AY-trooss) was a king of Mycenae in the Peloponnese, the son of Pelops and Hippodamia, and the father of Agamemnon and Menelaus. Collectively, his descendants are known as Atreidai or Atreidae.
[3] In Greek mythology, Thyestes (/θaɪˈɛstiːz/) was a king of Olympia. Thyestes and his brother, Atreus, were exiled by their father for having murdered their half-brother, Chrysippus, in their desire for the throne of Olympia. They took refuge in Mycenae.

- **Literary significance and criticism:**

In May 1844, just before its first publication, Poe wrote to James Russell Lowell that he considered "The Purloined Letter" "perhaps the best of my tales of ratiocination[^]." When it was republished in The Gift in 1845, the editor called it "one of the aptest illustrations which could well be conceived of that curious play of two minds in one person."
Poe's story provoked a debate among literary theorists in the 1960s and 1970s. Jacques Lacan argued in Ecrits that the content of the queen's letter is irrelevant to the story and that the proper "place" of the signifier (the letter itself) is determined by the symbolic structure in which it exists and is displaced, first by the minister and then by Dupin. Jacques Derrida responded to Lacan's reading in "Le Facteur de la vérité" ("The Purveyor of Truth"), questioning Lacan's structuralist assumptions. The triangular relationships that Lacan claims are foundational to the story are not, in fact, more foundational than other structured relationships one can perceive in it. Derrida sees Lacan's reading

as yet another structuralism attempting to establish an ultimate, foundational truth to the story. In reality, according to Derrida, none of the structural schemas one can see in the story are more foundational than any other. Lacan's structuralist[˄] reading and Derrida's deconstructive [˄˄]reading provoked a response by Barbara Johnson, who mediated the debate by suggesting that the letter belongs all along to the queen as a substitute for a phallus. Donald E. Pease suggests that Lacan "equates the possession of a letter—defined as a 'lack' of content—with 'literal' as opposed to 'symbolic' castration, hence the odor of the feminine. In other words the 'possession' of the lack otherwise displaced by language identifies the possessor with the lack 'she' thinks she possesses. So femininity exists as an 'effect' of the delusion of possession of a lack otherwise displaced (as a masculine effect?) by the endless purloining of the letter."
The debate up to the mid-1980s is collected in a helpful though incomplete volume titled The Purloined Poe. The volume does not include, for instance, Richard Hull's reading based on the work of Michel Foucault, in which he argues that "'The Purloined Letter' is a good text for questioning the metalinguistic claim that artists can't avoid doing surveillance, because it is a discourse on poetry's superiority over surveillance." Slavoj Žižek asks "So why does a letter always arrive at its destination? Why could it not—sometimes at least—also fail to reach it?" Hollis Robbins critiques Derrida for his own blindness to patriotism in prefacing his reading of "The Purloined Letter" with a reading of "The Emperor's New Clothes": "In Derrida's view, both Poe's story and Andersen's feature a king whose manhood is imperiled, who is surrounded by habit-driven and ineffectual civil servants, and who is saved by an individual who sees what is obvious. ... Both save the crown from further embarrassment. ... There is never a question that a king could or should fall from grace."

^ \ ˌra-tē-ˌō-sə-ˈnā-shən\ the process of exact thinking
Reason is the capacity of consciously applying logic by drawing conclusions from new or existing information, with the aim of seeking the truth. It is closely associated with such characteristically human activities as philosophy, science, language, mathematics, and art, and is normally considered to be a distinguishing ability possessed by humans. Reason is sometimes referred to as rationality. Reasoning is associated with the acts of thinking and cognition, and involves using one's intellect.

˄ **Structuralism**
A movement of thought in the humanities, widespread in anthropology, linguistics, and literary theory, and influential in the 1950s and ’60s. Based primarily on the linguistic theories of Ferdinand de Saussure, structuralism considered language as a system of signs and signification, the elements of which are understandable only in relation to each other and to the system. In literary theory, structuralism challenged the belief that a work of literature reflected a given reality; instead, a text was constituted of linguistic conventions and situated among other texts. Structuralist critics analyzed material by examining underlying structures, such as characterization or plot, and attempted to show how these patterns were universal and could thus be used to develop general conclusions about both individual works and the systems from which they emerged. The anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss was an important champion of structuralism, as was Roman Jakobsen. Northrop Frye’s attempts to categorize Western literature by archetype had some basis in structuralist thought. Structuralism regarded language as a closed, stable system, and by the late 1960s it had given way to poststructuralism.

˄˄ **Deconstruction**
A poststructuralist theory mainly based on the writings of the French intellectual Jacques Derrida. Deconstruction posits that meaning, as accessed through language, is indeterminate because language itself is indeterminate. It is a system of signifiers that can never fully “mean”: a word can refer to an object but can never be that object. Derrida developed deconstruction as a response to certain strains of Western philosophy; in the United States, deconstruction was the focus of a group of literary theorists at Yale, including Paul de Man and Geoffrey Hartman. Used as a method of literary critique, deconstruction refocuses attention on a work as open-ended, endlessly available to interpretation, and far beyond the reach of authorial intention. Deconstruction traces how language generates meaning both within a text and across texts, while insisting that such meaning can only ever be provisional.

An Analysis of Edgar Allan Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” From Five Different Literary Perspectives

Why Are Different Perspectives Important in Literary Analysis?

By applying different approaches to literary theory, readers can analyze works of literature from a variety of different and contrasting perspectives. This allows the reader to gain a deeper understanding and appreciation for a given literary work. Every approach to analyzing literature may give readers vastly different perspectives on a literary work. These diverse perspectives can help the reader to see a story from different points of view and develop multiple plausible interpretations for a story, based on the perspective used to make the analysis. By using these different literary perspectives, a reader may find that the personal meaning they find within a story is completely different from someone else’s interpretation. Understanding different approaches to interpreting and analyzing literate adds extra layers of meaning to literary works and greatly enhances the reading experience.

Literary theory has had a profound effect on literary interpretation. Edgar Allan Poe's story The Purloined Letter can be understood in a variety of different ways by applying different literary theories and techniques to each reading. As Berten's states in his introduction to Literary Theory, "interpretation and theory cannot be separated at all. […] Whether we are aware of it or not, […] theory cannot do without interpretation." Some literary theories focus primarily on the meaning behind the text, taking cultural, historical, and biographical context into account, while other focus mainly on form, looking primarily at the structure of the text in the work. Different approaches to literary theory reveal different interpretations when applied to specific literary works (Bertens). These different theories provide the means to find multiple layers of meaning in this short story.

❖ The Formalist Approach and Defamiliarization Applied to The Purloined Letter

In literary theory, formalism is a critical approach for analyzing and interpreting the inherent features of a text. This approach involves analyzing grammar, syntax, and literary devices. The formalist is less concerned with the historical and cultural contexts of a text than with the features of the text itself. One key technique in analyzing a text using the formalist approach is defamiliarization, which is a technique that allows the reader to see the elements of a story that would normally be overlooked in entirely new ways.

One thing I noticed regarding the form of Edgar Allan Poe's The Purloined Letter was the use of dashes to redact the year and certain names within the story. By purposefully not revealing this information, it makes it seem as though these facts are unimportant and that the reader doesn't need to pay much attention to them, but in doing so, draws more attention. This technique is seen often in literature from this era to give a sense of realism. Details that normally wouldn't have been given much thought by the reader are brought the reader's attention and can be thought of as a form of "defamiliarization" as it calls attention to normally familiar details.

The story is presented almost entirely through dialogue. The main idea of the story is revealed through the conversation between the characters. The defamiliarization comes from the fact that, unlike most stories' that readers would be familiar with, there is little narration and the plot is revealed through conversation about events that have already taken place rather than a direct look into the action. The story is structured around information being revealed little by little as the characters interact with each other. The crime-solving technique used by the narrator of the story is systematic and allows him to figure out the crime. This can be interpreted by a formalist approach. By defamiliarizing himself from the way the police are going about the investigation, he can gain a new perspective and solve the case.

❖ A Deconstructionist Analysis of The Purloined Letter

Deconstructionism is characterized by analyzing and dismantling text or parts of texts to reveal inconsistencies or contradictions within the text. Deconstructionists argue that a final meaning can never be found within a text, and every text remains "a field of possibilities (Bertens, 115)." Within the story itself, the characters have to "deconstruct" the case in order to solve it. To figure out where the letter is, Dupin had to deconstruct everything they knew about how the minister thinks. By doing this, he figured out that the letter was hidden in plain sight and was able to retrieve it.

For deconstructionists, "the text is always unfolding just ahead of the interpreter" (Bertens, 115). In the story, Dupin deconstructed the situation by remaining just ahead of the minister, and the reader experiences the situation along with Dupin. By understanding how the minister would have reacted, Dupin stayed two steps ahead and knew that it would be best to replace the letter with an exact copy, rather than simply take the letter and leave. The reader follows along with this and is forced to interpret Dupin's motives for not taking the letter right away and scheming to return in order to swap the letter for a fake. The reader is also left to interpret his reason for writing text inside the fake letter that made it obvious who had swapped the letter, after Dupin had gone through all the trouble to swap the letter without being caught. This apparent contradiction of Dupin attempting to cover his tracks when taking the letter, only to leaves clues as to his identity for the minister to find, is obvious during a deconstructionist reading of this story.

❖ A Marxist Analysis of the "Purloined Letter"

Marxist literary theory focuses "on the representation of class conflict as well as the reinforcement of class distinctions" in literary texts (Brewton). While Marxist theory does use traditional literary analysis techniques, it focuses more on the political and social meanings of literary works. Marixist theorists praise works that are sympathetic to the plight of the working class and that challenge economic inequalities of capitalist societies (Brewton).

From a Marxist perspective, in The Purloined Letter, the minister could represent the bourgeoisie (the upper class), whereas the owner of the letter could represent the proletariat (the working class). The minister uses the letter as a way of controlling the letter's owner by way of blackmail. Similarly, in a Marxist theorist could draw parallels between this and the way the bourgeoisie control the wealth in a capitalist society, thereby controlling the proletariat. The minister seeks to exploit and control others for his own personal benefit, much like the upper class of a capitalist society according to Marxist theory. Further, Dupin agrees to take the case for financial gain and revenge, not because he cares about justice for the letter's owner. This shows, from a Marxist perspective, that greed is the best motivator for people in a capitalist society.

❖ A French Feminist Analysis of "The Purloined Letter"

From the French feminist perspective, masculinity and femininity are presented as binary oppositions in literature. Women are considered passive and inferior, whereas men are considered active and superior. Within these binary oppositions, the feminine is always associated with the "inferior" term. This idea, according to French feminist theorists, is derived from patriarchal western culture. These ideas are damaging to women as well as men because they "curb the imagination" and are "therefore oppressive in general (Bertens, 137-41)."

In The Purloined Letter, the owner of the letter, a female, could be seen as representing the oppressed feminine. She is a passive victim. The minister could be seen as a masculine oppressor. He uses his position of privilege to control her and maintain power. Dupin, a male, may also represent the exalted position of males in society. He is the one that is called upon to retrieve the letter and protect the female victim from the minister. Only a male could save a female from another male. Further, the only female character in the story remains mainly a background character. We never learn much about her, other than her status as a victim. We know much more about the male characters, around whom the action of the story revolves. The single female character remains passively in the background.

❖ A Postcolonial Analysis of "The Purloined Letter"

Postcolonial analysis of literary texts explores the common theme of Eurocentrism present in most western literature. Postcolonial criticism emphasizes the tension between European cultures and the cultures that they have colonialized, whereas other literary theories ignore these issues. Postcolonial studies focus on the people of cultures who have become victims of Eurocentric thought, whether by racist attitudes, political issues such as military expansion, or economic exploitation (Bertens, 173).

In The Purloined Letter, we are not given any indication of the characters' races. Because the story takes place in Paris, the reader assumes that each character is white. From a postcolonial perspective, this whitewashing is indicative of a greater trend of Eurocentricism in literature. Further, the Minister's control over the letter's owner through blackmail could represent the exploitation of colonized cultures through the use of force. In a postcolonial analysis, the fact that Dupin produced the letter once the reward was increased also may represent the economic exploitation of colonized people. He was able to return the letter before the reward increased, but he chose to hold out for a greater financial gain at the expense of others.

Edgar Allan Poe is a master of the short story form. All the skill and craft required of a short story are evident in The Purloined Letter. This short detective fiction is about displaying the cleverness of the investigator (Auguste Dupin) in solving a case. As is the norm in this genre of fiction, " the criminal is caught and the victim suffers, but the investigator flourishes, acquiring pleasure from the hunt and both egotistical and financial gratification from the solution." (Thoms 141) In The Purloined Letter, the detective fully exercises his powers of reasoning and deduction to arrive at the solution to the riddle. In his regard, one can equate this work by Poe to those numerous Sherlock Holmes stories written by Sir Conan Doyle. But there are certain features that distinguish the story from others in the genre. Firstly, Poe has crafted the plot in such a deliberate manner that there is symmetry of thought and action by the characters. Secondly, Poe applies psychological analysis in attributing meaning to, and anticipating actions of, the characters in the story. Thirdly, Poe subtly raises questions of morality through the means of actions of the characters. The rest of this essay will elaborate these points.

An obvious feature of The Purloined Letter is its lack of pronounced mystery or suspense, for the identity of the thief, the manner of the theft and the motivations behind it are all openly disclosed. The only question is the exact place where the letter is hidden. The gravity of this question lies in the fact that the letter is a crucial document, upon whose access the Royal Lady's illicit affair could be exposed. Indeed, " in the Minister's and Dupin's struggle to possess this

letter, this hidden story of transgression, brilliantly dramatizes the contest for narrative control that underpins detective fiction." (Davidson 219) A key passage in the story where Poe applies psychological analysis is when Dupin explains to his friend how he went about calculating the intelligence of the Minister and consequently using this measure to speculate on his likely behaviour. Estimating the Minister's intelligence to be very high, Dupin infers that the possible methods employed by him to hide the letter will also be clever. In this way, the Minister is a match to Dupin's own high intelligence, allowing the latter to mirror and predict the former's thought and behaviour. An illustration of the Minister's intelligence is his first accidental encounter with the royal lady's letter, where, " after discerning the hidden story through a brilliant act of reading in which his lynx eye immediately perceives the paper, recognises the handwriting of the address, observes the confusion of the personage addressed, and fathoms her secret, the Minister conceives the plan of pocketing the letter and then blackmailing the lady." (Thoms 141)

Another merit of the story is the remarkable symmetry in the plot. The Minister, being a cunning and clever man, scripts the scenario in which he gains possession of the scandalous letter. For example, he manufactures a letter that looks similar to the lady's secret possession and opens it and pretends to read it. Without raising any suspicion, he places casually places it next to the lady's letter. After finishing his conversation, as he gestures to part, he nonchalantly picks up the lady's letter. Even if the lady notices that it is her letter which is being taken, she cannot object to it, for it would give away her secret. Dupin's masterful counterplot to steal back the letter from the Minister is conceived on similar lines, lending symmetry to the plot. (Thoms 141) The symmetry extends further, for both Dupin and the Minister are poets and authorial figures, who " can read circumstances and script the action; they share the initial D; and they both purloin the letter, an action which promises profit and allows us to see more clearly how detection becomes a kind of thievery as the investigator assumes possession of the hidden story and of the characters contained within it." (Thoms 141)

Poe's genius is also evident in how he criminalizes the solving of crime itself, thereby raising questions of morality. In other words, far from acting on noble intentions, Dupin undertakes to solve the crime only for personal benefit, namely a check for 50, 000 francs. He hardly breaks a sweat for this hefty pay, for the prefect was the one made to pursue standard search and seizure protocols, which prove futile. Having thus eliminated the usual hiding places for the letter through the Prefect's testimony, Dupin makes his master move like a seasoned chess player. Moreover, the method he employs is not ethically above that of the Minister, for Dupin too resorts to stealing. Here, Poe is highlighting the moral ambiguity of the whole enterprise. The moral ambiguity is further heightened when we take into account how the Royal Lady's mission to get back the letter is not officially notified to authorities. Instead, she uses her position of power to use state apparatus for personal purposes. So, her actions are ethically dubious as well. Hence, The Purloined Letter is more than a mere detective story, for the detective and his client are not decidedly the righteous lot. In other words, " Poe proceeds to destabilize what he has wrought by challenging the apparent opposition between good detective and bad criminal. The story critiques the authority of the detective, subverts his solutions, and thus resists closure. From the making of the facsimile and the act of re-stealing the three Dupin stories seem preoccupied with reflection, repetition, and the blurring of boundaries…we glimpse how the imaginative Dupin adopts the character and perspective of the ostensible criminal." (Thoms 142)

Through a careful reading of The Purloined Letter, one can decipher a broader psychological device that Poe applies to his short stories. The key factor behind Dupin's successful resolution of the case is his anticipation. This is made possible by being able to understand and rely on the pattern of behaviour of his subject – the Minister. Poe refers to it as ' simplicity', the " unitary characteristic of both mind and world" that aids Dupin's predictions. Here, Poe is trying to approximate human behaviour to a scientific law by setting up a formula by which the several modes of human thought and action could be understood. First, " there was the action of the commonplace, ordinary mind — the " real" side of man — which conformed to a calculus of probability simple to unmask merely by putting one's own mind in logical reference and identification with it: Poe's analogy was the boy who could easily outwit his fellows by guessing in which hand the marble was held. Next, the more complex, original mind was impelled toward simplicity, toward final and ultimate comprehension. It was the character of this mind to conceal itself, as did Minister D behind some other or inverted calculus of relevance." (Davidson 219)